

Demographic dynamics of Mexico, 1950-2015

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Summary

This article presents Mexico's demographic situation for the period 1950-2015, based on the results of the harmonization of levels and trends of the components of demographic dynamics, carried out by the General Secretariat of CONAPO, COLMEX, SOMEDE, and UNFPA in the most recent retrospective exercise. This harmonization will serve as the foundation for developing future population projections. The objective is to provide a historical overview of the demographic phenomena that have shaped and defined population studies in recent years and that have influenced the actions and focus of the country's population policy. It also provides an opportunity to celebrate the 20th anniversary of this landmark publication.

Key terms: demographic reconciliation of Mexico, population, migration, fertility, mortality, changes in demographic patterns.

Introduction

Mexico has a significant body of information that allows us to account for its demographic history - recent history of the country. From this perspective, a guide can be provided to understand the interactions between socioeconomic aspects and demographic variables and how they affected and influenced their behavior. Part of the actions undertaken in the seventies to discourage the significant population growth of that time consisted of providing the necessary elements for people to decide freely, responsibly, and with full information about the size and spacing of their offspring and about the exercise of their reproductive rights, established in Article 4 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States.

The trend toward exponential population growth led to a new policy that would directly impact the country's population. In 1974, the National Population Council (CONAPO) was created, a collegiate body responsible for national demographic planning. This involved analyzing the transformations in the size, structure, dynamics, and territorial distribution of the country's population, with the aim of including it in economic and social well-being and considering the needs arising from demographic dynamics.

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Since then, the analysis of the differences in the rhythms and evolution of the variables of the country's demographic change have been part of the functions of this Council, which in just over four decades has consolidated population policy as an instrument through which the Government of Mexico seeks the harmonious and sustainable advancement of the nation, in the search for a fair distribution of the benefits of economic, social and cultural development, becoming an authentic State policy, with international recognition of its leadership in the matter (conapo, 2014).

Changes in the age structure of the population highlight different needs that must be addressed by public policies. The aging of the population is of particular interest, given the pension, health, and care needs of older adults; however, the coexistence of this population with other age groups, even those with a significant presence, such as the adolescent population, presents problems associated with these ages, such as teenage pregnancy or school dropout, which require specific actions.

dissimilar to those of an aging population. Therefore, This article aims to show, in a summarized way, the evolution of Mexico's population through a demographic perspective, with information that promotes understanding and provides elements that allow anticipating the probable consequences and future behavior of demographic dynamics.

To illustrate these variations in the demographic process, this analysis will examine the evolution based on the most recent demographic reconciliation exercise carried out by the General Secretariat of CONAPO (SG-CONAPO), El Colegio de México (COLMEX), the Mexican Society of Demography (SOMEDE), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), drawing on the experience of Dr. Virgilio Partida Bush in implementing the project (Partida, 2017). The content is presented

in five sections: the situation of the country's demographic dynamics, the structure of mortality, the fertility levels, the dynamics of interstate migration, and the pattern of international migration.

Mexico is a country with great diversity, both regionally and locally, which requires in-depth analysis; therefore, the study of state transformations will not be the subject of this article. However, these will be presented when they are introduced and Publish the Demographic Reconciliation of Mexico, 1950-2015, with its respective information.

Demographic dynamics situation of the country, 1950-2015

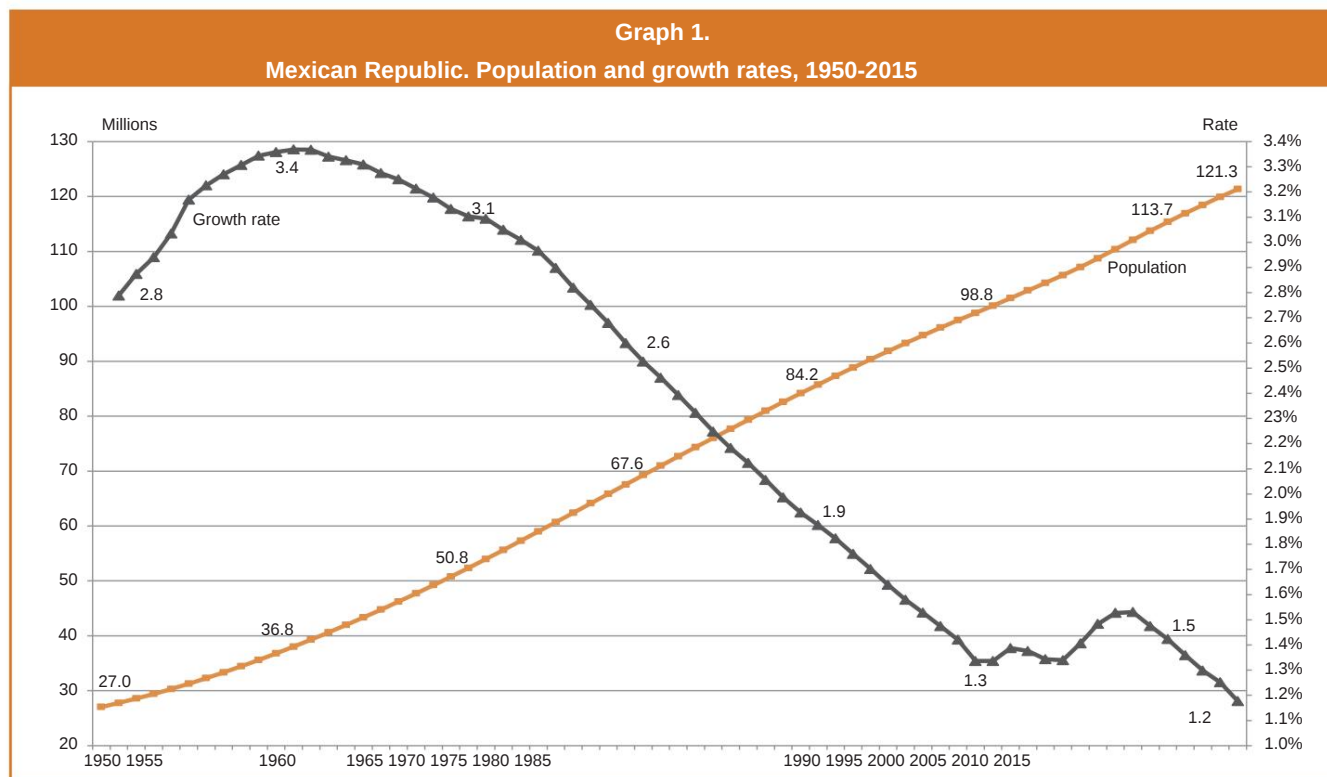
A review of the final figures from the 2015 Intercensal Survey (INEGI, 2015) revealed that the population volume in that year was 1.5 million lower than that considered in the projections prepared by the SG-CONAPO in 2012. As a result of a new and meticulous reconciliation exercise between the different sources of demographic data, carried out in 2016, a total population of 121.3 million inhabitants was estimated in mid-2015, of which 49 percent is made up of men (59.4 million) and 51 percent, of which 61.9 million are women.

The figure resulting from this reconciliation coherently describes the demographic dynamics of the country from 1950 to the last intercensal exercise 2015, resulting in the base population, derived from the analysis of information from all available sources that account for the components of the demographic dynamics, carrying out an evaluation and correction of the inaccuracies that arise (coverage, declaration and content errors) (see graph 1).

The changes observed in the first decades of analysis show an increase in the volume of inhabitants, where the total population In 1970 it corresponded to almost double that existing in 1950, that is, after only 20 years, the number of inhabitants went from 27.0 million to 50.8 million, an increase of 88.1 percent.

Had that growth rate continued, the

The number of people would have doubled again in just 23 years; however, given the implementation of public policies that allowed for an impact on the dizzying growth of the population, in 1993 the amount reached only 88.9 million, that is to say, it was



Source: Prepared by CONAPO based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

14.3 percent less population than it would have been if the growth of 1970 had been sustained (conapo, 2010; Partida, 2017).

The magnitude and increase in Mexico's total population, a result of rapid demographic growth, was maintained until the 1960s. Subsequently, a continuous decline was recorded until the beginning of the 21st century, after which, due to observed migratory variations, a growth rate with sudden fluctuations emerged, reflecting the remnants of the migratory movements that occurred between 2005 and 2010, with 2009 being the year in which its value increased. Afterward, it resumed its decline, reaching a growth rate of 1.18 per 100 inhabitants in 2015, marking the pattern of the country's demographic behavior. In other words, the differences do not reflect significant changes between some of the population gains (births) and some of the losses (deaths), but they do demonstrate the impact of migration on the country's growth patterns.

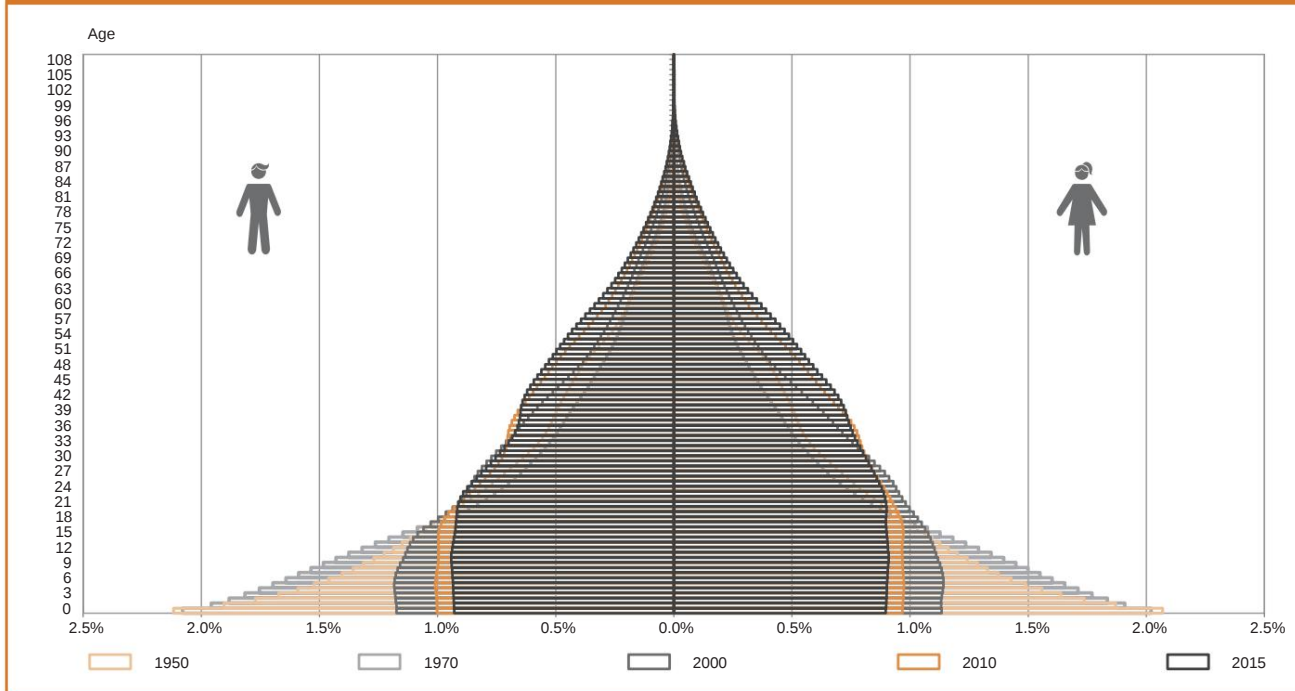
The contribution of each demographic phenomenon to the aging process is clearer if we separate the trends of birth, death and migration into three periods, which roughly correspond to the stages of Mexico's demographic transition: rapid demographic growth (until 1969), the decline in fertility (1970-1999) and the convergence of the phenomena (2000-2050) (Partida, 2005).

Currently, the progress of the demographic transition²—caused by factors such as medical advances, improvements in living conditions, childhood health actions aimed at reducing infant mortality, and increased life expectancy—has led to a rapid increase in the number of older adults, as illustrated in Figure 2. The growth in the number of individuals over 65 years of age is gradually increasing

² The demographic transition refers to the shift from high birth and death rates to low, controlled levels.

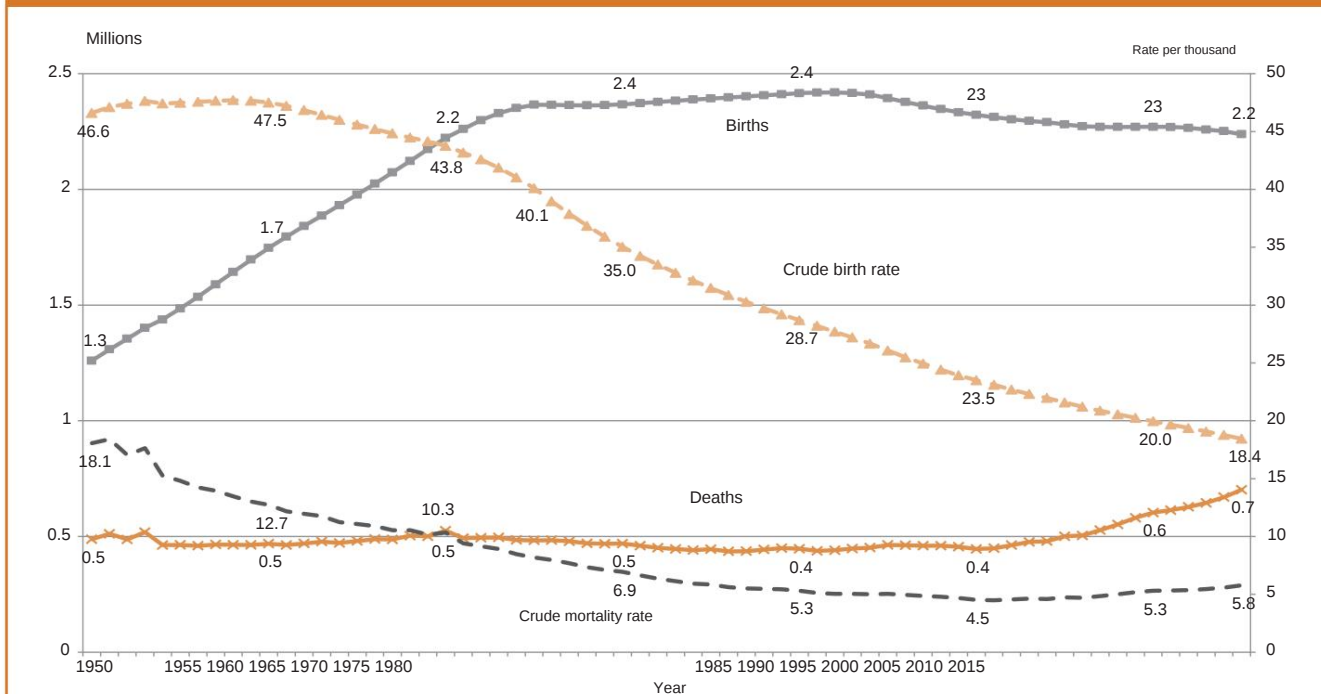
The demographic situation of Mexico 2017

Graph 2.
Mexican Republic. Population pyramids, various years



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

Graph 3.
Mexican Republic. Birth and death rates and volume, 1950-2015



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

The apex of the pyramid, representing 6.8 percent of the total population in 2015, with women having the largest presence in this age group (54.8%). This group grew from 792,900 older adults in 1950 to 1.8 million in 1970, and from 4.9 million in 2000 to 8.2 million in 2015; that is, it increased more than tenfold between 1950 and 2015.

Mexico has followed the typical pattern of transition, as can be seen in Figure 3. It is evident that in 1970 the high mortality and fertility rates began to change, showing a gradual decline that led to a reduction in those same rates. From 2000 onward, the decrease in the synergistic effects of birth and death rates reflects the impact of advances in healthcare on increased survival rates into old age, which in turn modified the reduction in mortality.

The presence of low birth rates, corresponding to the decline in fertility and a slight increase in the crude death rate, due to the undeniable aging of the Mexican population, leads to a significant reduction in natural growth. Therefore, policies that focus on the population should be considered to address the coming scenario, where

The influence of natural growth on the country's development will be reduced, leaving the entire burden of this to the effect migration, which will influence the growth dynamics of the population in Mexico, as well as its age structure.

The child and youth population has been decreasing considerably. In the second half of the 20th century, around 1958, the highest birth rate in the country's history was observed, with 47.7 live births per thousand inhabitants, subsequently registering a continuous decline until reaching a rate of 18.5 live births per thousand inhabitants in 2015. This difference marked a significant change.

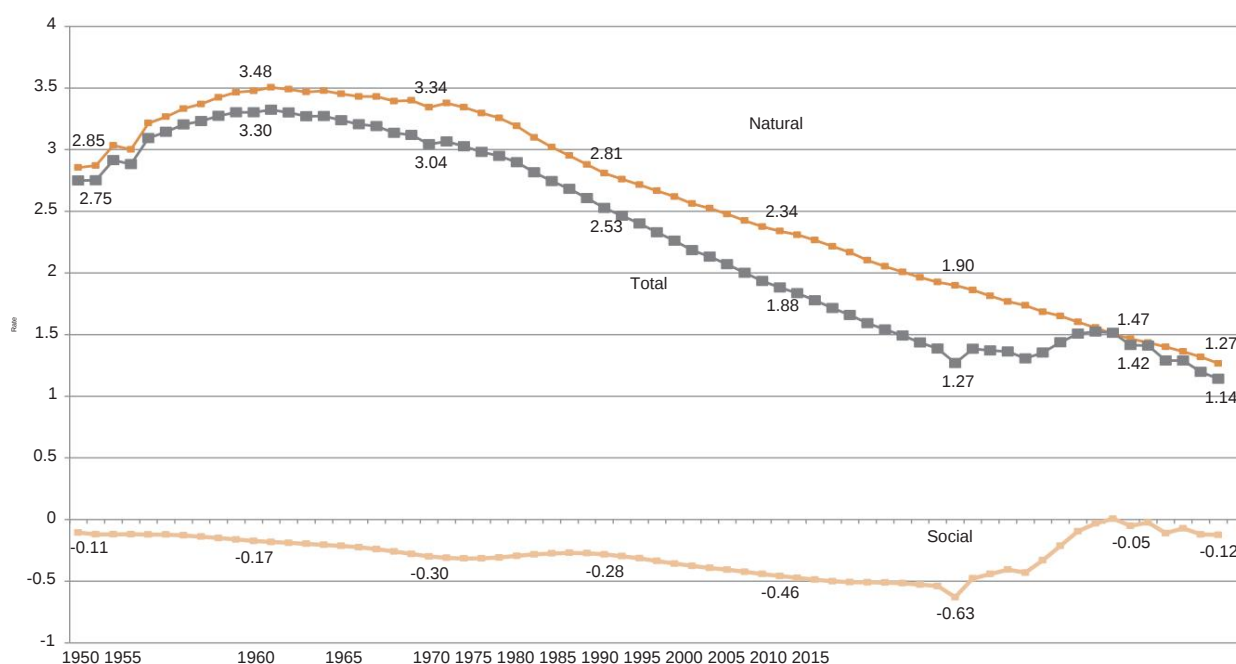
in the trend of the phenomenon, allowing that there are currently only 2.2 million births, unlike the 5.8 million that would have been had the birth rate existing in 1958 been maintained.

In terms of deaths, the decline has been less pronounced. It is possible to identify that the highest crude mortality rate occurred around 1951, with 18.4 deaths per thousand inhabitants, representing almost 511,200 people, compared to 5.8 deaths per thousand inhabitants in 2015, equivalent to 702,000 deaths. Similarly, had the mortality rate remained at 1951, there would be 2.2 million more deaths today. The effect of these two phenomena is that the annual natural growth rate, which reached 3.5 percent in 1961—the highest value—decreased to 1.3 percent, demonstrating the significant decline in these components (see graph 4).

On the other hand, the effect of migratory traditions in Mexico's history has created significant synergies with its northern neighbor. These synergies have had implications for migration in recent years, becoming the driving force behind population mobility. This mobility has been stimulated by the rise in structural job opportunities and discouraged by political changes, particularly those focused on the inclusion of Mexican nationals with irregular immigration status. The implications of this migration on Mexico's net international balance are undeniable, reaching its highest point in 2000. This was primarily due to the economic and migration policy factors that proved attractive to migrants who left Mexico without being able to obtain formal immigration status.

Likewise, the presence of a migration policy focused on deportation that emerged between 2007 and 2009 led to a counterflow of the Mexican population, allowing for the observation of variations in its trajectory. As a consequence of this combination of phenomena, total growth reflects the changes identified in the evolution of the population, considering that in recent decades the variations that have the greatest impact on it are basically a reflection of migration (see graph 4).

Graph 4.
Mexican Republic. Total, natural and social growth, 1950-2015



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

Mortality structure

The continuous decline in mortality allows us to affirm that the factors influencing this trend are not merely circumstantial, but rather linked to changes associated with the development and modernization process in which the country has been immersed. This decline in mortality in Mexico is undeniably linked to the living conditions of the population.

Specifically, if we compare the infant mortality recorded in recent times with that of the early 1950s, where the mortality rate was 129.9 deaths of children under one year old per thousand live births, there is evidence of a reduction of 9.1 times, remaining at 14.2 deaths of children under one year old per thousand live births in 2015.

The age composition of deaths has changed; in 1950, more than half (52.6%) of annual deaths were of children under 3 years old, while by 2015 only 5.1 percent of total deaths corresponded to that age group. In the middle of the last century,

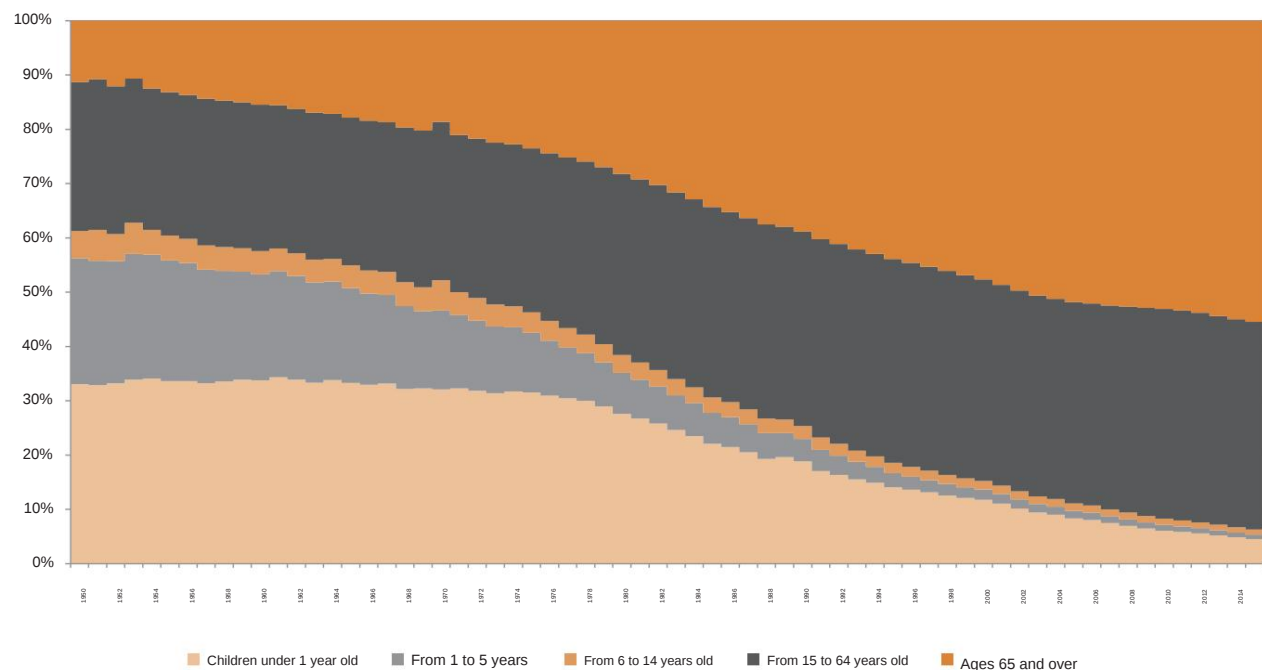
The population barely reached 60 years of age; ten out of every thousand people aged 15 to 64 had died, while by 2015 only three died; among older adults (65 years and over) 78 died

out of every thousand in that age group, and currently there are only 51 deaths; however, as can be seen in graph 5, this age group is the one that represents the highest proportion of deaths for 2015, given the greater survival of people into adulthood.

The mortality rate during the first years of life is an indicator of a country's well-being and development. Infant mortality in Mexico shows a marked decline despite some spikes in its trend.

This is a result, on the one hand, of the demographic change and, on the other hand, of the evolution of the epidemiological transition process that occurred in the country, giving way to the surveillance, attention and close eradication of diarrheal, respiratory and vaccine-preventable diseases, which determined the high levels of mortality during the first half of the twentieth century.

Graph 5.
Mexican Republic. Mortality patterns, 1950-2015



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

These spikes are attributed to respiratory illnesses that afflicted the infant population in 1970 and a measles outbreak in 1990, which were addressed by national public health programs that reversed the increase in mortality from these causes,³ resulting in difficult-to-control diseases, linked to genetic problems and malformations, currently being the main concern in terms of infant mortality (Perdigón and Fernández, 2008). According to the results obtained in Mexico, infant mortality fell to less than 15 deaths of children under one year of age per thousand live births, which indicates that the lives of at least 2.2 million infants have been saved.

currently having the regrettable loss of only one child for every one hundred births (see graph 6).

These figures reveal the progress made in preventing infant mortality, but it is possible to foresee that in the coming years the decreases in this rate will be very small, despite medical and institutional advances in the care of pregnant women and children under one year of age.

The increase in conditions originating in the perinatal period, determined by the presence of socioeconomic,⁴ genetic,⁵ health,⁶ environmental factors

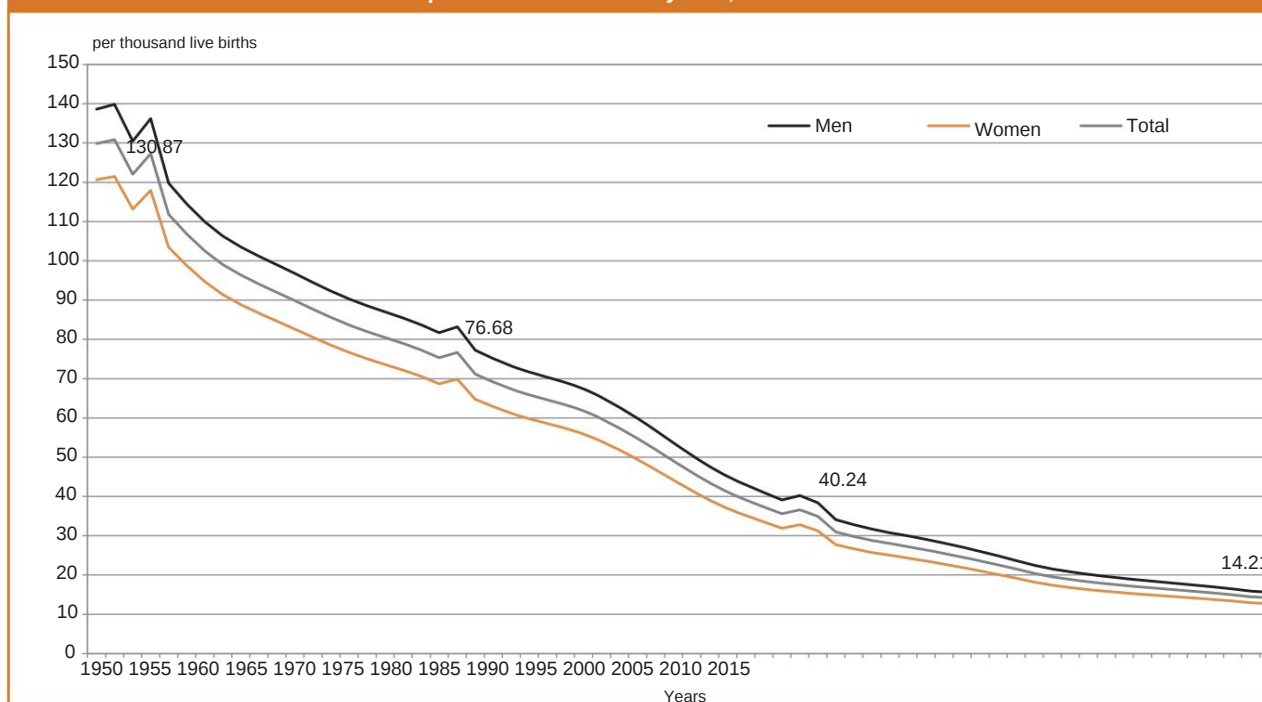
³ Among vaccine-preventable diseases, the eradication of smallpox, the elimination of polio and measles, and the control of diphtheria, pertussis, and neonatal tetanus, among others, stand out significantly. Likewise, the substantial reduction in infectious and intestinal diseases, as well as acute respiratory infections, is noteworthy.

⁴ Those related to the presence of poverty, low income, inequality, etc.

⁵ Mainly those related to consanguinity practiced in some communities.

⁶ These include nutritional ones and those related to diseases such as diabetes and infections, primarily those of sexual origin.

Graph 6.
Mexican Republic. Infant mortality rate, 1950-2015



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

Les7 and toxicological tests,⁸ will affect the health of infants, determining the gradual presence of congenital anomalies, which will make it more difficult to reduction in infant mortality due to the complex of your attention (who, 2015).

An indicator strongly linked to the Changes in infant mortality are reflected in life expectancy at birth. The constant improvement observed in this indicator shows that from 1950 to 1960 the life expectancy of the Mexican population increased by about nine years, reaching a value of 56.2 years at the end of the period, reaching 70.9 years by 1990 and increasing to 74.7 years by 2015; despite these great advances, in the period 2000-2015 life expectancy shows a significant slowdown in its progress (see graph 7).

7 Such as the mother's contact with pesticides, or those where the mother must perform work in environments where there is contact with harmful chemicals, heavy metals, etc.

8 Those related to the intake of alcohol, tobacco, psychoactive drugs and radiation.

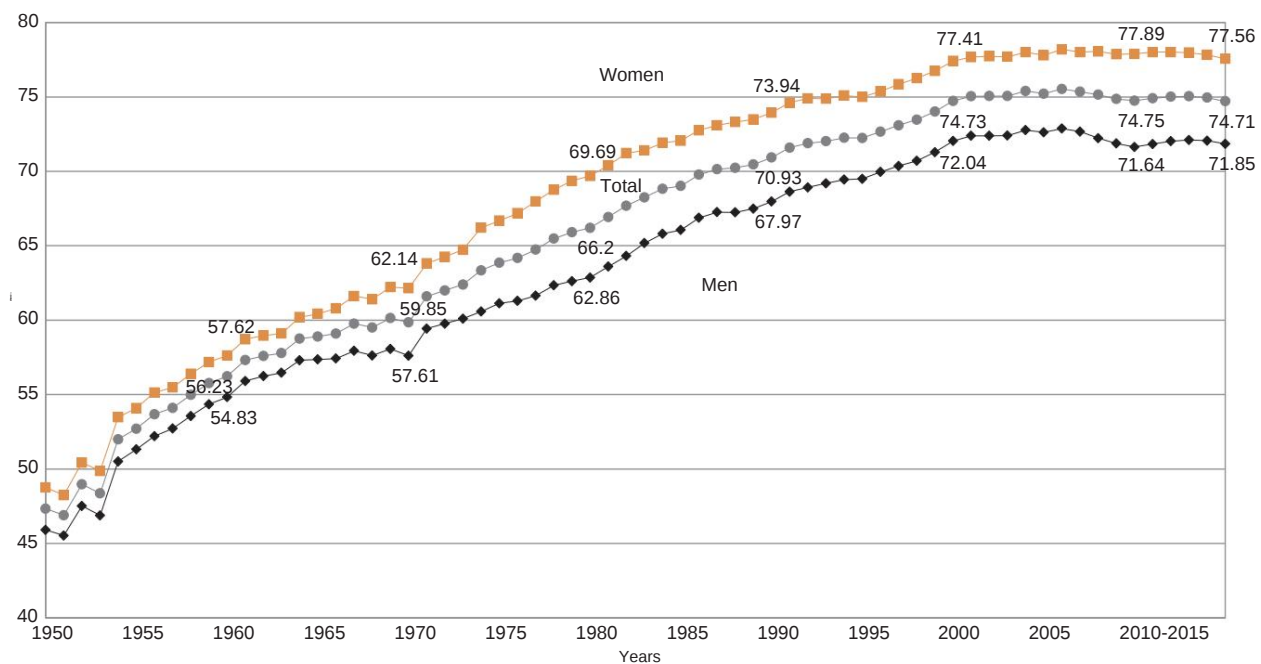
Similarly, despite the health outcomes and epidemiological achievements, at the international level, the life expectancy of the Mexican population is below the average life expectancy of the member countries of the

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Economic (OECD), of 78.7 years, with our country's being one of the lowest in the organization (OECD, 2018).

Figure 8 illustrates the evolution of total life expectancy at birth and by sex for the population of the country, accounting for the changes over the years and the reduction of the distance with respect to the current OECD average. The apparent stabilization of the trend is also noticeable. since the beginning of the 21st century – derived in good measure of changes in the age structure of the population— which is explained by the undeniable aging process that will continue to increase, making gains in life expectancy imperceptible.

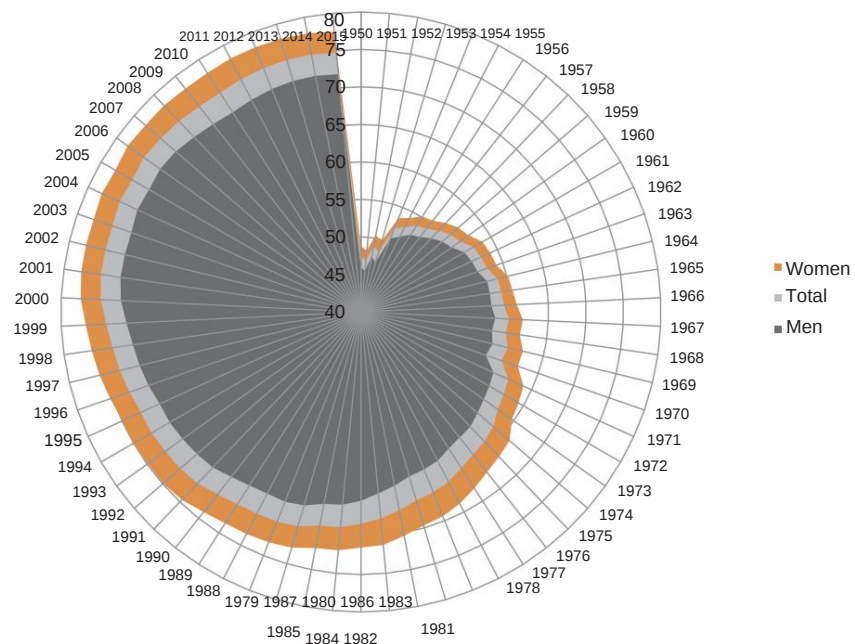
The profits recorded in the different decades They talk about the changes and advances in the area of sa-

Chart 7.
Mexican Republic. Life expectancy at birth, total and by sex, 1950-2015



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

Chart 8.
Mexican Republic. Life expectancy at birth, total and by sex, compared to the average of life expectancy in OECD member countries, 1950-2015



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

However, this indicator does not allow us to know the quality of health conditions at these ages.

Fertility levels

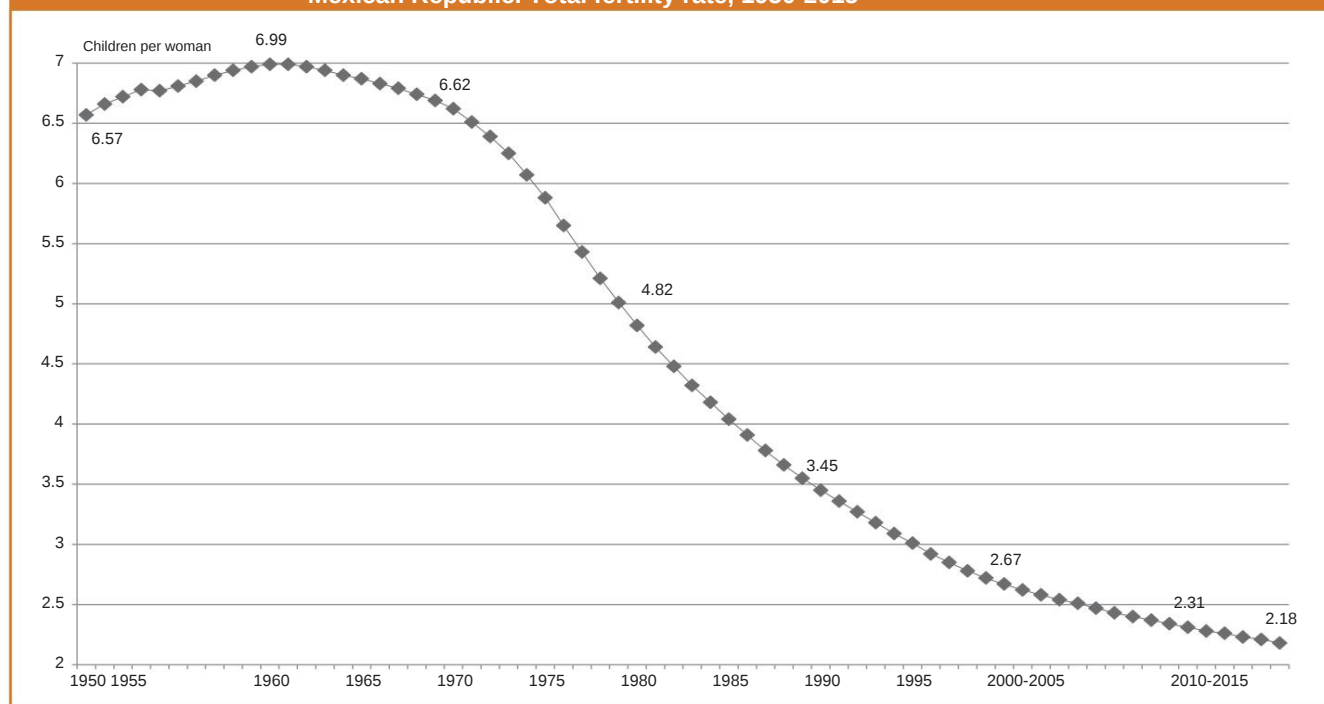
One of the most beneficial interventions of the 1974 population policy led to a decrease in fertility among women of childbearing age, resulting in reduced population growth and fostering the country's development and growth. The evolution of fertility is generally divided into two main stages: the first, characterized by high fertility rates resulting from policies that encouraged population growth in an attempt to address the remnants of war and its depopulation, establishing immigration as another way to repopulate the empty spaces of a fragmented Mexico.

The second, defined by the remarkable task of containing accelerated growth that, although viewed with acquiescence, did not take into account the pressure

social change was approaching (García, 2014). Since this marks the turning point in the population decline, it is important to note that the greatest decrease occurred in the 1970s, when the birth rate was initially 6.6 children per woman, falling to 2.7 children per woman by 2000—a decrease of four percentage points. By 2015, the birth rate was very close to the replacement level (2.2 children per woman) (see Figure 9). This resulted in a narrower base of the population pyramid, causing the relative weight of the child and youth populations to decrease and their presence to diminish at an ever-increasing rate (Partida, 2012).

The characterization and analysis of fertility can be incomplete if the history and dynamics of this demographic phenomenon are not considered, analyzing the different age groups of women of childbearing age (CICRED, 1976). The decline in fertility has several elements that demonstrate the significant changes that have occurred through the reduction of each age group. The decrease in the number of children per woman is evident: from 298 children in 1950 to only 124.

Chart 9.
Mexican Republic. Total fertility rate, 1950-2015



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

On average, the number of children born to women aged 20 to 24 in 2015 fell from 318 to 109 per 1,000 women aged 25 to 29; the downward trend has been more pronounced in recent decades. However, despite these steady declines in fertility rates

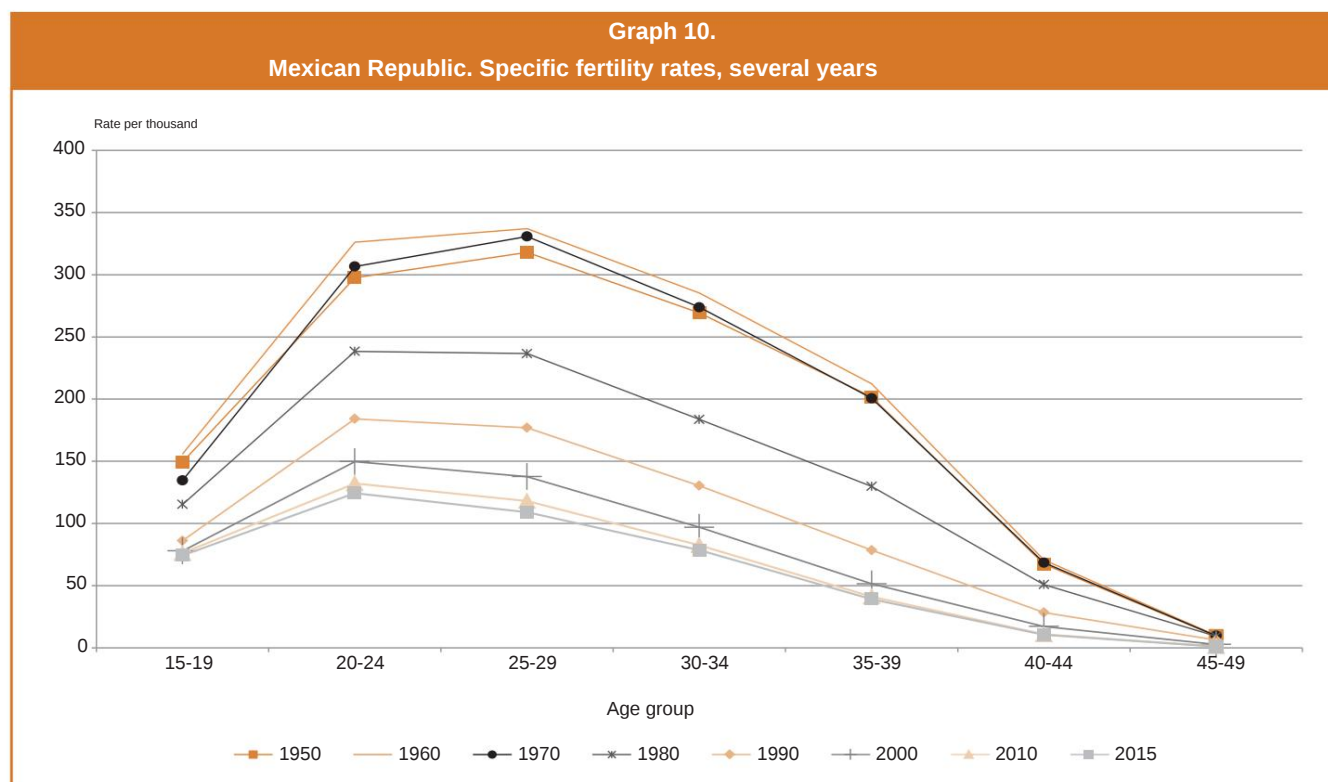
Specifically, it is essential to point out that the rates of decline are uneven. Women in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups contribute the most to the total fertility rate and, therefore, register the greatest reduction in their participation (see graph 10).

The adolescent fertility rate has declined less than fertility rates among young women; in fact, it has remained almost constant over the last 20 years. This phenomenon peaked in 1957, reaching 157 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19, but improvements in social welfare, increased school attendance, greater awareness of gender inequalities, and access to sexual and reproductive health have contributed to a reduction in this figure: by 1970, the rate was observed to be

135 births per thousand adolescents in 2000, 78 per thousand women aged 15 to 19, reaching 74 births per thousand adolescents in 2015 (see graph 11).

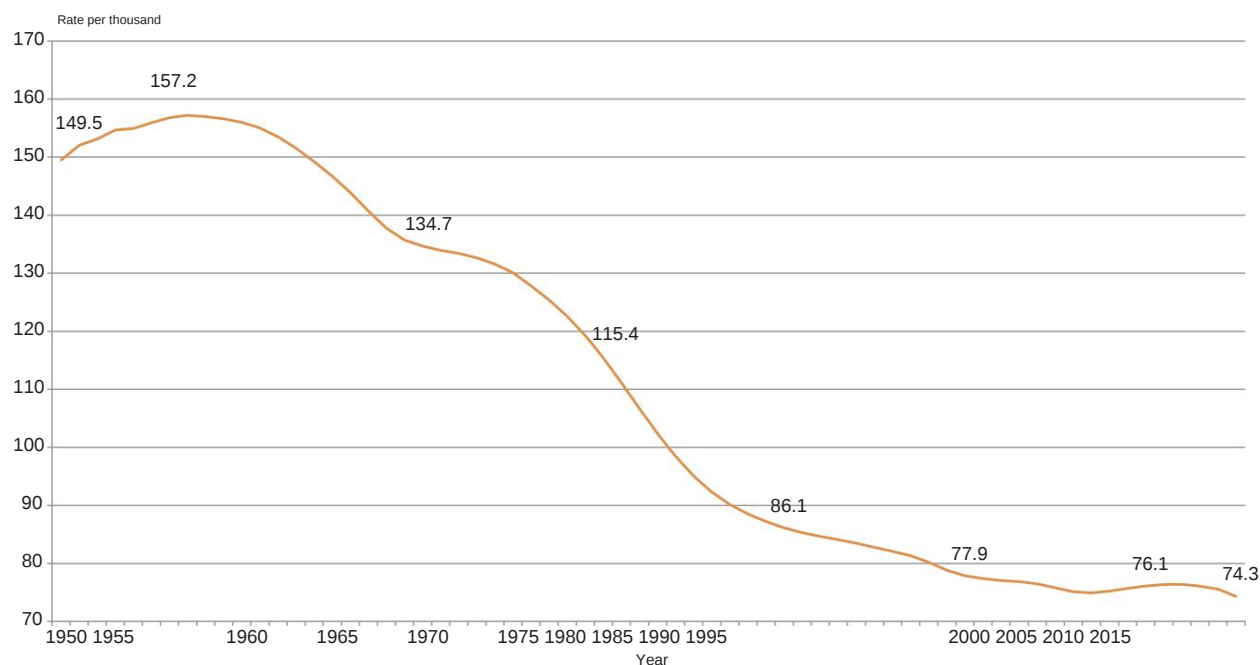
According to OECD data, Mexico exhibits one of the highest adolescent fertility rates among its member countries. In 2014, only Colombia surpassed it with 85 births per thousand women aged 15 to 19, while Mexico registered 74, Peru 68, and Chile 51, compared to an average of OECD member countries of 15 (OECD, 2017).

There is a possibility that further reductions in fertility will be recorded in this age group of women, due to the implementation of public policy actions, such as the National Strategy for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy (enapea), which has as one of its objectives to reduce, by 2030, the specific fertility rate (ref) of adolescents by 50 percent, as well as eradicate pregnancies in girls under 15 years of age, with absolute respect for human rights, particularly sexual and reproductive rights.



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

Graph 11.
Mexican Republic. Adolescent fertility rate, 1950-2015



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

This National Strategy calls upon the Government of The Republic, the state governments, international organizations and civil society to articulate, promote and implement actions that aim to influence the prevention of pregnancy in

adolescents, such as providing comprehensive education. Sexuality education is provided at all educational levels. Through this, young people are given information, training, and knowledge to make assertive decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives. Actions related to access to and use of contraceptive methods are also being implemented to significantly reduce teenage pregnancy, as well as communication actions.

social awareness and education aimed at the population about the difficulties and complications associated with early pregnancy, and about the consequences of the possibility of interrupting educational life and thus complicating entry into working life from this event.

The Mexican adolescent population that develops in a context of few opportunities access to better living conditions and development

development of skills and means that promote their benefit and growth, is prone to going through teenage motherhood.

The specialized literature indicates that education is a determining factor influencing both the age of onset of reproductive activity and the intensity of motherhood, especially in this age group. However, the importance of factors such as marital status, gender relations, and opportunities for entering the labor market must also be recognized as contextual mechanisms for overcoming poverty, which can reduce the likelihood of becoming a teenage mother (Varela *et al.*, 2014).

Dynamics of interstate migration

Interstate migration is a decisive component of the country's internal demographic dynamics, consisting of processes of spatial mobility of the population that allow its redistribution, with the consequent

These have demographic, social, cultural, and economic implications, both in the place of origin and the destination. Generally, such mobility is undertaken as a mechanism to improve the quality of life of this population. Migration is measured through the movements of the population between geographic units, movements known as migratory flows. The main sources of information that account for these events are the

censuses, counts, or surveys. Likewise, demographic reconciliation, which is analyzed in this article, allows us to study the evolution of interstate migration from 1970 onwards.

The dynamics of interstate migration are very important, as they reflect what the population considers an individual decision and a social behavior that allows them to expand their economic and social opportunities and enjoy an environment that fosters their development. The trend in its evolution shows stabilization, although a reduction in its volume is not expected (Rodríguez, 2007). Recent interstate migration is more substantial than international migration; in fact, the number

The number of people who move internally (3.9 million interstate migrants) is three times greater than the number of those who emigrate to another country (1.3 million international emigrants).

Looking at migration flows between 1995 and 2000, we can point out that these were more diverse than in 2010-2015. In the first period, for the 3.8 million who migrated internally, the five main receiving entities were: State of Mexico (848,600), Mexico City (344,600), Veracruz (212,500), Jalisco (196,600) and Baja California (178,100).

Meanwhile, for those who left their state, they mainly went from Mexico City (983,700) to the State of Mexico (339,600), as well as to Veracruz (249,200), Jalisco (172,400) and Puebla (156,400).

Migration to and from Mexico City has played a primary role in the structure of the country's internal flows, including the flow of immigrants and emigrants that has been concentrated in Mexico City, the State of Mexico, and Veracruz, although lately-

This has decreased. See graph 12 for the bases occupied by these entities.⁹

Migration for the period 2010-2015 amounted to 3.9 million, with Mexico City (21.7%), State of Mexico (11.0) and Veracruz (8.0%) being identified as those that expelled just over 40 percent of the country's inter-state emigration.

A similar proportion was received by the State of Mexico (18.9%), Mexico City (9.5%), Baja California (5.7%), and Veracruz (5.0%), making them the main destinations during that period. It is important to note that the flow between Mexico City and the State of Mexico follows a special dynamic due to their geographical, industrial, and urban development relationships, as well as those acquired by the conurbation (COESPO and El Colegio Mexiquense, 1993) (see graph 13).

The analysis of interstate migration in both periods reveals a significant decrease. When considering current emigration (2010-2015) compared to that observed in the 1995-2000 period, Chihuahua and Baja California are the states that show the greatest decrease in the volume of population leaving each of them to go to another state within the country (a reduction of 19.0%).

and 18.9%, respectively). On the other hand, Guerrero (33.9%), Baja California Sur (32.1%), the State of Mexico (28.4) and Veracruz (26.3%) show an increase of more than a quarter of the population of each of these entities moving to another, responding to different local phenomena or to a more attractive job offer.

In the case of immigration, significant reductions are observed in entities such as the State of Mexico (13.5%), Durango (12.6%) and Zacatecas (11.7%), which have stopped receiving the population contribution they received in the period 1995-2000.

In contrast, in Querétaro (28.2%), Chihuahua (27.8%), Campeche (22.4%), Yucatán (21.7%) and Baja California

9 Aguascalientes (AG), Baja California (BC), Baja California Sur (BS), Campeche (CP), Chiapas (CS), Chihuahua (CH), Mexico City (CM), Coahuila (CO), Colima (CL), Durango (DG), Guanajuato (GT), Guerrero (GR), Hidalgo (HG), Jalisco (JL), State of Mexico (MX), Michoacán (MI), Morelos (MO), Nayarit (NY), Nuevo León (NL), Oaxaca (OX), Puebla (PU), Querétaro (QT), Quintana Roo (QR), San Luis Potosí (SL), Sinaloa (SI), Sonora (SO), Tabasco (TB), Tamaulipas (TM), Tlaxcala (TX), Veracruz (VZ), Yucatán (YU), Zacatecas (ZT).

◆ ◆ ◆ The demographic situation of Mexico 2017



Graph 13.

Mexican Republic. Interstate Migration, 2010-2015

The diagram is a circular chord diagram representing interstate migration flows in Mexico from 2010 to 2015. The outer ring of the circle is divided into segments, each representing a Mexican state or the total population (MX). The segments are labeled with state abbreviations: MX, NL, OX, PU, QT, QR, SL, SI, SO, TB, TM, TX, NL, AG, IZ, UN, BC, CP, BS, CO, CL, CS, CH, CM, DG, GT, GR, HG, IL, and MX. The thickness of the lines (chords) connecting different segments represents the volume of migration between those states. The diagram shows a high density of migration flows, particularly between states in the central and southern regions. The colors of the lines vary, with some being orange and others grey, possibly indicating different types of migration or different time periods within the 2010-2015 range. The overall pattern suggests a high level of internal mobility within Mexico.

The demographic dynamics of Mexico, 1950-2015



(20.7%) An increase of nearly a quarter of the population residing in these areas has been identified. Migration strategies often stem from security concerns or the search for a better quality of life; this migration indicates significant changes in both the origin and destination states, which have very likely affected their economic, social, and cultural development.

International migration patterns

The patterns of international migration that currently prevail in the country are considerably different from those known at the end of the 1950s. The close relationship that Mexico maintained with the United States allowed for the authorized circular movement of approximately half a million Mexicans who traveled annually to the neighboring country (Bracero Program).

In the mid-1960s, changes in US immigration policy drastically reduced opportunities for documented migration to that country, thus redesigning strategies

of migration (Massey, Pren and Durand, 2009), as a consequence of the transformation of US economic and migratory policy, in addition to the successive crises of the Mexican economy.

In 1976, a period of relative and questionable stability in the Mexican economy came to an end, which fueled undocumented migration, allowing the United States to meet its demand for low-skilled labor (Figueroa and Pérez, 2011). This was further exacerbated by the crises of 1982 and 1994, which led to increased unemployment and intensified undocumented migration (Li Ng and Nava, 2014). This migratory dynamic not only resulted in migration from rural areas but also in the incorporation of a more heterogeneous profile of migrants, encompassing...

to urban areas, increasing the presence of an irregular migratory status and a circular dynamic in displacements (Bautista and Rodríguez, 2016).

During the 20th century, migration from Mexico to the United States was favored by the inability

of the Mexican labor market to capture the workforce produced by the numerous generations of the time, followed by an increase in female migration, both from the individual and family context, as well as the diversification of migratory flows

in the destination and origin that increased migration, going on to participate, at the end of the century, in a policy of control of raw materials, trade and investment opportunities, accentuated during the Second World War (Ortega, 1979).

Subsequently, the presence of various events, including economic crises, the effects

The opening of Mexico to the international economy through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), as well as the restructuring and organization of the US economy, influenced

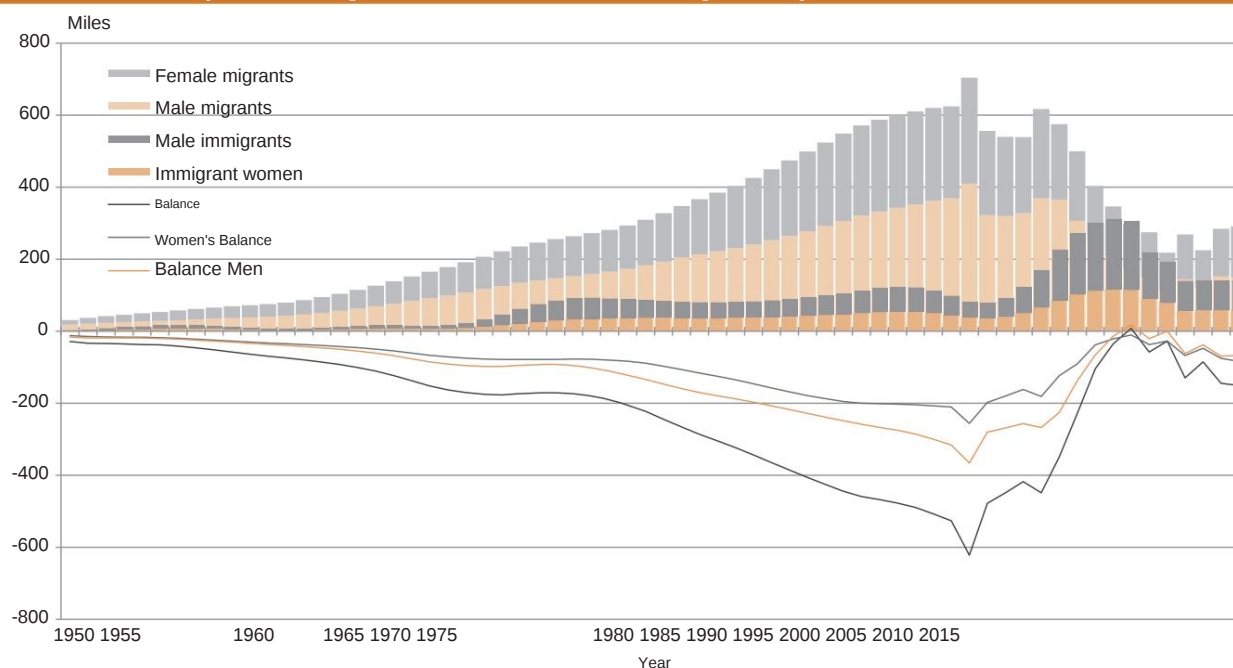
directly impacting the incidence of migration. Furthermore, for the Mexican population,

Migration to the U.S. has been a survival strategy to cope with difficult times and provide for their families, which makes it clear why the migratory volume between these two nations represents the main flow of international migration in our country (see graph 14).

As a result of this migratory dynamic Internationally, in 2015 the country's population was altered by the departure of 291,100 inhabitants to other nations and by the arrival of 140,300 people, resulting in a negative net migration balance of 150,800 people. The repercussions of this trend and the stagnation of the natural growth rate indicate that the rate of social growth will be one of the determinants of variations in the total population growth volume in recent years (see graph 4). This influence has meant that the migration phenomenon has been the watershed moment for the country's overall growth, as is clear when observing the migration curves of decline and increase (see graph 14). The importance of this phenomenon, given the tightening of US government immigration policies, will be one of the main topics on the national political agenda to determine the actions to support the reintegration and integration in Mexico of returning migrants.

Graph 14.

Mexican Republic. Changes in Mexico's international migration by sex, 1950-2015



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

This migratory process, closely linked to the U.S., continues to this day with intensified border surveillance and the resilience of the Mexican population, which has generated changes in migration trends and patterns, reaching its peak with 703,500 Mexicans leaving the country in 2000. Anti-immigrant policies, the lack of agreements for the circularization of workers, among other causes, have led to voluntary returns, as well as intense deportations, such as the case of the approximately 311,000 inhabitants who returned in 2008, becoming the highest figure reached historically in recent years.

Return migration is a process inherent to the changes in both nations, with North American economic crises being one of the main causes. The way migrants migrate has changed; initially, migrants stayed for short periods in the United States, returning to their places of origin afterward. However, this circular and temporary nature of Mexican migration has been gradually disappearing, due to the strengthening of the border and the consequent increase in migration costs, or because of the

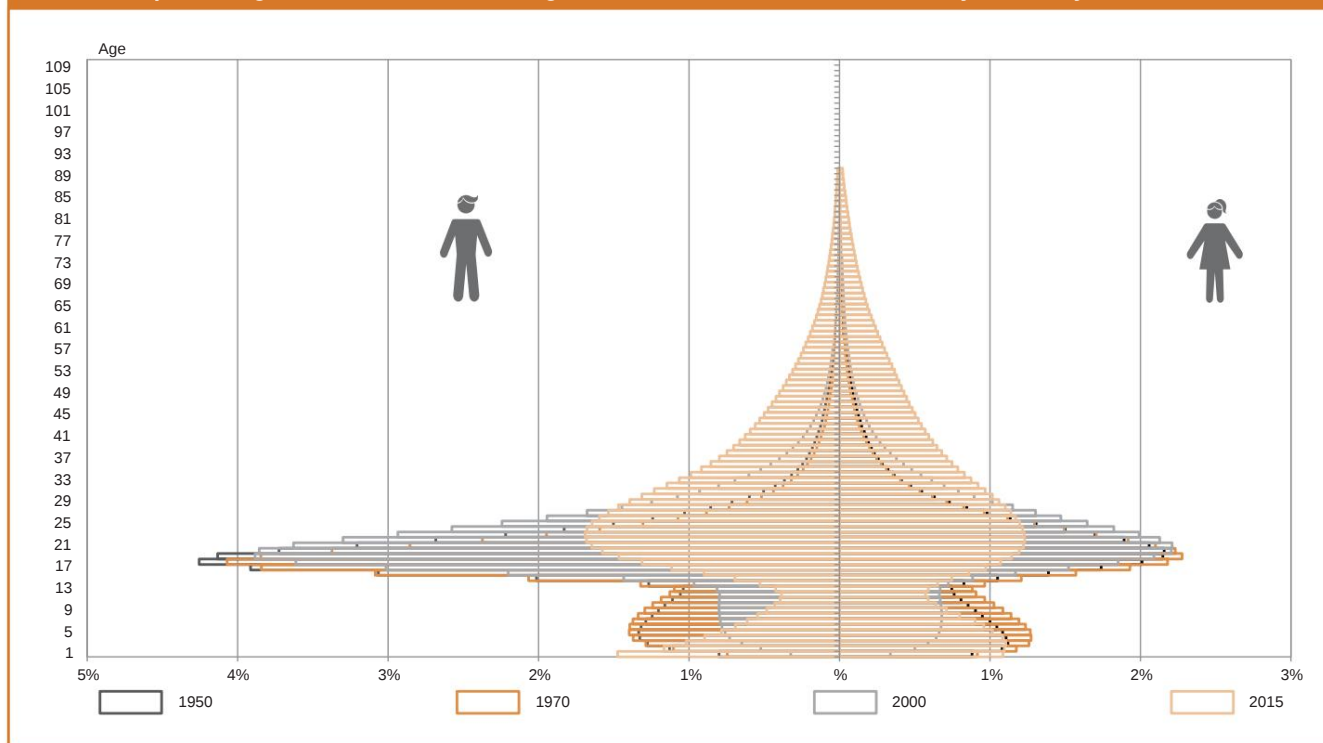
preference of migrants to settle permanently in that country (conapo, 2012).

Fluctuations in international migration in recent years indicate that Mexico is a country of origin, destination, return, and transit for migrants, which contributes a very particular dynamism to the country's migratory behavior that directly impacts the structure and composition of the Mexican population (Villagómez, 2009). This process of change becomes evident when considering differences by age and sex. The age structure of migrants shows a pattern that remained consistent until 2000, with a continuous increase in their volume, predominantly among young people. Changes in this pattern followed in subsequent years, with the intensity of migration decreasing by almost a third and the age of migration increasing.

The age composition of migration flows over these 65 years shows very different dynamics: in 1950, about 50 percent of the population that left the country was 17 years of age or younger, and this structure remained until the year

Graph 15.

Mexican Republic. Age and sex structure of migrants from Mexico to another country, several years



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.

2000, while by 2015 the participation of the population under 17 years of age decreased by about 20 percentage points, resulting in a greater concentration of the migratory flow between 20 and 25 years of age (see graph 15).

Male migration is evident as the majority; however, despite the historical trend of its increase since 1970, this population group reduced its participation in the last fifteen years.

dramatically by almost double. In 1970, the The flow of emigrants amounted to 165,000 people, of whom 55.5 percent were men. By the year 2000, the number of people who left the country was four times greater, reaching more than half a million (703,500 people), with the male presence intensifying to 58.2 percent and with a significant contribution to the economic participation of the receiving country.

By 2015, the repositioning of women in the migration process was most pronounced; that year, despite changes observed in previous years, female migration reached 48.5 percent.

one hundred percent, after having been reduced in 2000 to 41.8 percent, allowing us to highlight the incorporation of women in the migration process (see graph 16).

Another aspect of the changes in the di-

A key dynamic of international migration is the increase in migration of older adults, which shows increases of almost five percentage points, rising from a negligible presence in 1950 (0.6%) to 5.3 percent in 2015; changes such as these can be attributed to the cultural, economic, social, and political dimensions of migration. Between 2000 and 2010, according to Li Ng and Nava (2014), a large part

Of the older Mexican migrant adults, many arrived in the U.S. at a very young age or during their productive years, having on average the lowest levels of education, the lowest proportion of U.S. citizenship, and the highest rates of masculinity.

in old age. This puts them in conditions disadvantaged compared to other migrant groups, therefore the need to consider a series of measures, actions and policies in-

walks to address the economic and health needs of this population sector in terms of returning population.

Analyzing the changes in the phenomenon makes it evident that emigration historically concentrated most of the migratory flow, but not the immigration. It was not until 2009 that both phenomena became equal, such that the difference between both rates was only 0.1 percentage points and in absolute terms there was a gain of more than seven thousand inhabitants. After that year, fluctuations again appear, highlighting the complexity of this phenomenon and the difficulty of predicting it, since, as mentioned, it is determined by various situational factors in the countries of origin and destination that make it difficult to predict its behavior.

Defining a scenario allows scholars to analyze the likely effects and consequences, so that the State can...

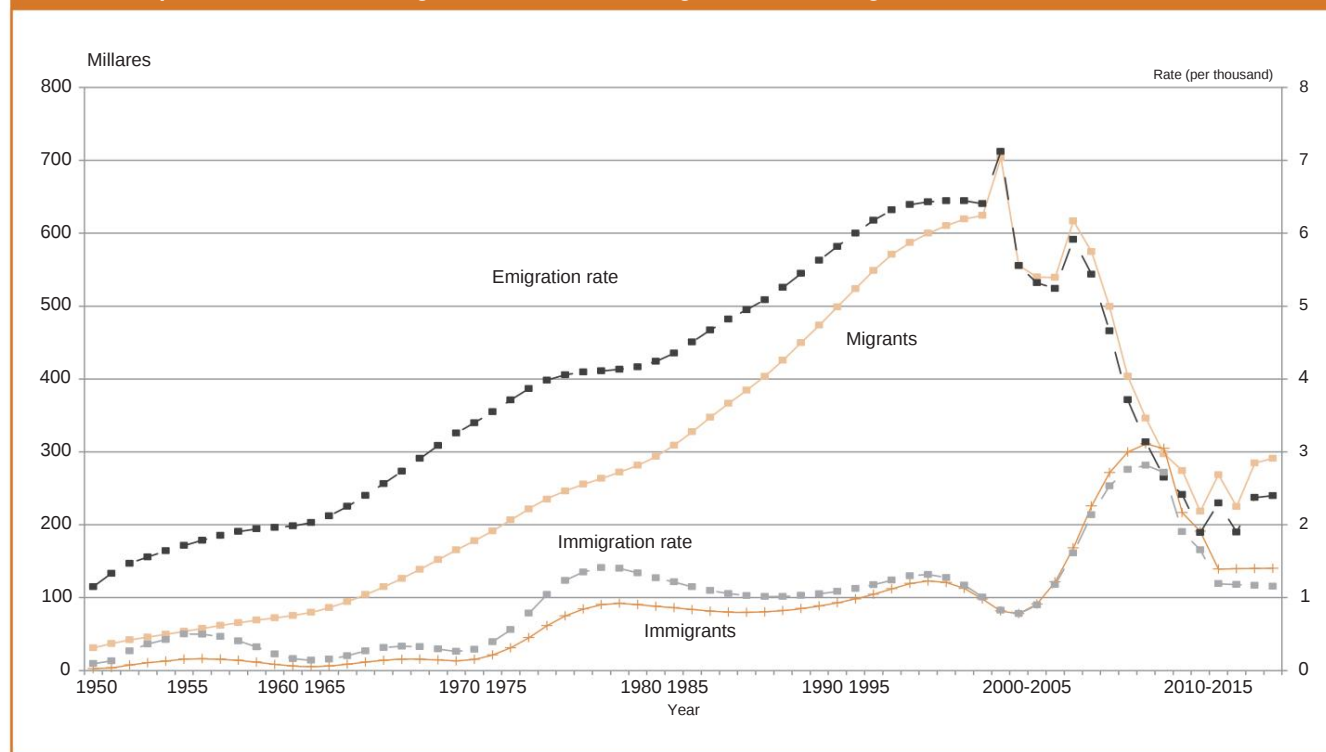
Mexicans should consider the binational implications of this phenomenon and identify future trends. Due to the particularities of this demographic variable, its numerous facets, the challenges to be analyzed, and the particularly problematic conditions—such as those faced by Mexican families where mothers or fathers lack the necessary documents to reside or work in the U.S.—constitute a topic that presents significant political and social challenges.

Final considerations

The current demographic situation in Mexico demands the implementation of new public policies that address, on the one hand, the aging of the population and, on the other hand, changes in fertility, mortality, and migration patterns, in addition to strengthening existing policies that have proven their effectiveness.

Graph 16.

Mexican Republic. International migration volume and emigration and immigration rates, 1950-2015



Source: CONAPO estimates based on the Demographic Reconciliation, 1950-2015.



effectiveness in addressing the changes brought about by national demographic dynamics.

This work has presented the demographic past which, to some extent, allows us to foresee what the future will bring and thus anticipate actions to optimize the well-being of the country's population, as well as address the challenges that arise from changes in demographic determinants.

The task of decision-makers in this country is not easy, because the demographic dynamics of the recent past are manifesting their effects now and will continue to do so in the coming years. The advantage of analyzing these dynamics is that many can be foreseen, and therefore it is possible to anticipate and address the needs of the Mexican population in situations such as population aging, the formation of households in which up to three generations live together, declining fertility rates, the conditions under which greater population survival occurs, new patterns of marital unions, changes in migration flows and their intensity, among others.

Sociodemographic changes over the past 65 years have been substantial. However, despite the progress made and the undeniable fight to eradicate socioeconomic inequality, some shortcomings persist. These are becoming increasingly complex to resolve, as they continue to generate intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequality that significantly limit the development of the most vulnerable populations and prevent them from enjoying a dignified life. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize addressing their needs with targeted strategies that cater to each population group and improve their integration into development processes, respecting their rights and enabling them to exercise those rights in all areas.

Demographic dynamics present challenges that require analysis and attention in order to clearly plan the evolution of population policy implementation on solid foundations, considering the heterogeneity of a policy that prioritizes access to

development and the equitable distribution of the benefits inherent in an advanced demographic transition.

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